The Collar of Remorse

And lo! at one, beside our bank, there flew
A reptile which transfixed him on the spot
Striking him just where neck and shoulders blend
: : : Replied the wretch : : :
"Bestial, not human life pleased me : : :
—Dante

ONE evening a month or so ago I lingered amid gay but frail company; it was necessary at last for me to take a train to go home; twenty minutes of a hilly path separate the station from the latter. The night was oppressive and I felt overheated. Soon I had to unbutton my collar; it slipped from me and I could not find it again. But I saw it again the next morning as I was going down towards the Paris train. I saw it already trampled upon and I saw it again in the evening. And the following day again and the same each day, every evening, every morning, and each time trampled upon a little more. From very far off I see it, I know beforehand that I am going to see it, my eyes look for it in spite of themselves. I am not able, I do not dare, to pick it up, for she whom I love is watching me from the neighboring villa. There is no street-cleaning service, be it understood, in this countryside. Therefore until the wheels of carts, the feet of passers by and the rains have disintegrated it, finally annihilated it—if that shall ever happen—the fabric which seems indestructible, every morning, every evening, I shall see; I shall hear the collar, once immaculately white, call to me in its language: Fagus, Fagus, Fagus, thou hast soiled thy immortal soul!

These collars, really indestructible, come from the Establishment Faivret, "Monopole Linen," rue Saint Honoré, Paris.

(Mercure de France)

LES PREMIÈRES LARMES D'HERCULE

Hercule le héros, un soir dans Mytilène
A rencontré Chrysis la blonde, aux yeux troublants.
Pour la première fois, il aime éperdûment:
De ses cheveux d'or fin sa maîtresse l'enchaîne.

Mais aujourd'hui, son cœur souffre d'amère peine,
Il sait qu'elle le trompe, et lui, le dieu vaillant,
Comme un simple mortel, comme un petit enfant,
Il pleure son amour et sa tendresse vaine.

Près de Chrysis si frêle, il semble encor plus fort,
Et pourrait l'écraser d'un seul coup, sans effort;
Pourtant à ses genoux il prie et se lamente:

Pendant que la coquette, en son miroir d'argent,
L'air lassé, l'œil cruel, admire complaisante,
Le peigne d'or, cadeau de son nouvel amant.